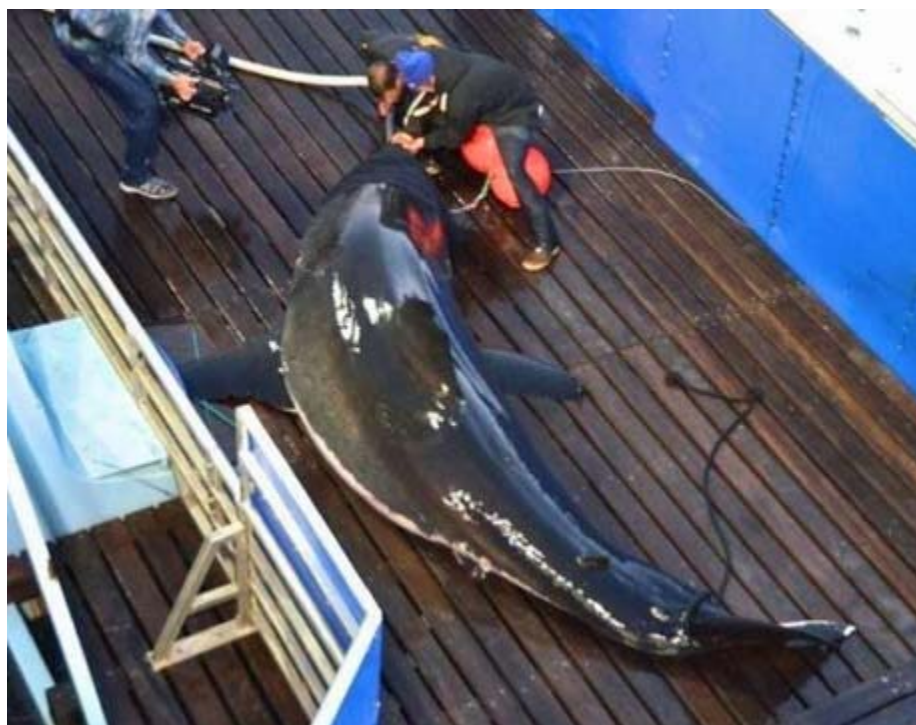




Great white shark crews stop in Jacksonville

Fishermen, scientists to continue expeditions, starting off coast of NE Fla.

Published On: Feb 20 2013 04:14:03 PM EST Updated On: Feb 20 2013 06:36:26 PM EST



Mary Lee, which was tagged on Sept. 17 off the coast of Cape Cod, Mass., was 16 feet in length and weighed 3,456 pounds at the time she was tagged.

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. -

It will get your heart racing and put you on the edge of your seat watching the experts wrestle the ocean's giant -- the great white shark.

Now imagine doing it.

"Whenever they come out of the water, it's just a completely different animal. It's unlike any video you could ever see," said Alex Snow, of OCEARCH.

The video is pretty remarkable of the crew catching and tagging Mary Lee, a 16-foot great white that made its way to the break line in the surf of Jacksonville Beach last month.

It could have been the crew's last tagged shark if it weren't for a partnership with Caterpillar Inc., which is going to sponsor nine more expeditions over the next three years.

The first is in Jacksonville, about eight miles offshore.



"The reason why this is so important is because there's so little known about the great white sharks worldwide, and especially in this part of the world there's just almost nothing known as far as where they travel, where they give birth," OCEARCH Capt. Brett McBride said. "Where they're mating and giving birth are the two important ones."

The crew will spend two weeks off the Jacksonville coast aboard a 126-foot ship (pictured, above) equipped with a hydraulic lift and research platform in hopes of catching and tagging more great white sharks, which will take a lot of chum.

"We'll put some chum in cages and we'll chum off the back of the boat, and once we locate a shark, then we go about trying to hook them with a hook and line, which is a fairly big hook, chain, cable and rope and buoys," McBride said. "And once we're able to subdue the shark, we will then drag them over to the ship, where this platform will be lowered over to the side. We'll drag him right over the top, lift him over the water."

That will give scientists about 15 minutes to do their job, which includes putting a GPS tracking device on the shark's dorsal fin.

"Then we lower it and let them go, and then we follow them where they go and learn about it," McBride said.

That's the goal -- to learn about the lions of the ocean and ultimately protect them, with the best in the world on board.

"Getting world-class fisherman together with the best scientists in the world and collaborating together and trying to get something done that we could never have done on our own," McBride said.

For more information about OCEARCH, go to OCEARCH.com.

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